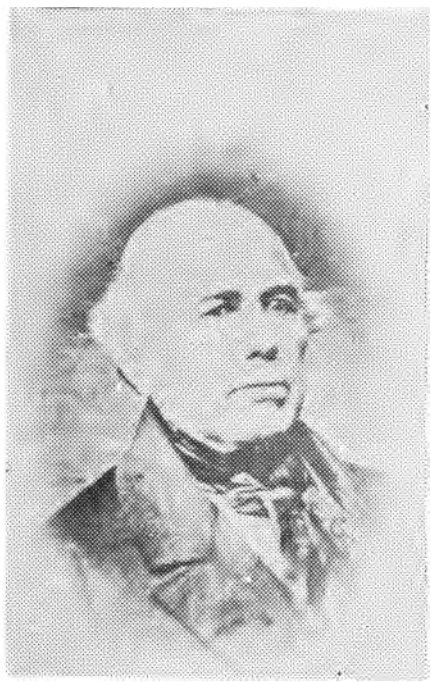
ELEAZER WILLIAMS



Form a photo. taken just before his death.

Eleazer Williams

ELEAZER WILLIAMS

NOT THE DAUPHIN OF FRANCE

A LECTURE

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ELEAZER WILLIAMS

NOT THE DAUPHIN OF FRANCE

ON October 13, 1841, the Prince de Joinville, with his suite, took passage at Buffalo, New York, on the side-wheel steamer *Columbus*, Captain John Shook. This prince, younger son of Louis Philippe, king of the French, was following the example set by his father, when in exile, two score years before, and was seeking the western wilderness. When, on October 18, 1841, the *Columbus* had ploughed her watery furrow to Mackinac, a clerical looking gentleman, appearing about fifty years of age, awaited at the wharf, the tying up of the vessel. The name this gentleman carried was Eleazer Williams and his purpose was to board the steamer and to companion with the princely party on its further voyage to Green Bay. Wide newspaper advertisement of the prince's itinerary had permitted Williams thus to anticipate Joinville's movements, while the latter, who had been seeking for a person skilled in Indianology and acquainted with the Northwest and had learned of Williams in these connections, was eager for the introduction to him which the captain of the vessel accomplished.

The next afternoon at three o'clock, the afternoon of October 19, anchorage was made at Green Bay. Williams is our main authority for what conversation took place during the ride, and he is our sole authority for what he relates to have occurred at a private, appointed interview between the prince and himself during the evening of the nineteenth at the Astor House in Green Bay. More than eleven years after, on December 7, 1852, Williams, while in New York, disclosed orally to a friend, Rev. J. H. Hanson, what he declared were the details of this interview and he fortified the disclosures by the production of what he claimed to be a contemporary diary reciting the same details.

This paper must much condense Williams' narrative, which is printed at length in Hanson's "Have We a Bourbon Among Us?"* and "The Lost Prince." †As the climax to much preliminary matter, Joinville hailed Williams as the son of Louis XVI of France and Marie Antoinette of Austria, his wife. The prince explained that he, Eleazer, had been rescued from the Temple tower after the king's execution, but he failed to disclose the time, the agencies or the method of this evasion. He, Eleazer, had been brought to America when about ten years of age, and placed in the wilds of Canada in the home of Thomas Williams, far from the revolutionary influences that would destroy him. The Prince de Joinville's own object in coming to America now was to seek him out. Williams relates to us how great was his astonishment at this revelation, how incredulous he was at first, and how certain the prince was of his identity. Thereupon, the prince produced from his trunk, a parchment, garnished with the governmental seal of France, used under the old monarchy, and placed the document before the new-found king of France and Navarre and requested his signature. Williams studied it. It was very handsomely written in French and English in parallel columns and proved to be a solemn abdication of the crown of France in favor of Louis Philippe. The pay for this abdication was to be a princely establishment in France or in America, besides the restoration, either in kind or in money equivalent, of all the private property which the Revolution had confiscated.

Williams read and considered the parchment four or five hours, his reflections gradually yielding to great anger. The sight of this seal in the hands of an Orleanist, the thought that Louis Philippe sat upon the throne from which *he* had been so ignominiously excluded, the reflection that there stood before him the grandson of that Égalité who had voted for the death of Louis XVI, kindled in every fibre of his being, Bourbonic wrath! He, the scion of the elder branch, the legitimate heir of France, scorned to barter his honor and his birthright for gold. We quote: "The prince upon this assumed a loud tone and accused me of ingratitude in

* Putnam's Monthly Magazine, Feb., 1853, vol. i, 194, 204. † Page 356.

trampling on the overtures of the king, his father, who, he said, was actuated in making the proposition more by feelings of kindness and pity towards me than by any other consideration, since his claim to the French throne rested on an entirely different basis to mine, viz. not that of hereditary descent but of popular election. When he spoke in this strain, I spoke loud also, and said that as he, by his disclosures, had put me in the position of a superior, I must assume that position and frankly say that my indignation was stirred by the memory that one of the family of Orleans had imbrued his hands in my father's blood and that another now wished to obtain from me an abdication of the throne. When I spoke of superiority, the prince immediately assumed a respectful attitude and remained silent for several minutes. It had now grown very late and we parted with a request from him that I would reconsider the proposal of his father, and not be too hasty in my decision. I returned to my father-in-law's,* and the next day saw the prince again and on his renewal of the subject gave him a similar answer. Before he went away, he said, 'Though we part, I hope we part friends.'" Upon whatever terms they parted, they never met again.

While this strange tale is fresh in our minds, a few observations concerning it are pertinent:

First: There was but one person in existence who could substantiate or deny this revelation story and that person denied it as soon as it was brought to his attention. When the February, 1853, number of Putnam's Monthly, containing the article, "Have we a Bourbon among us?", arrived in England, the Prince de Joinville was living in Surrey, an exile from his country. By his secretary's hand, he wrote immediately to the London agent of Putnam's, stamping the story of the secret interviews and revelation as a work of the imagination, a fable woven wholesale, a speculation upon public credulity.† The issue of fact, thus raised, will occupy us later.

* Williams had gone to the home of Joseph Jourdain, his father-in-law, upon the arrival of the *Columbus* at Green Bay.

† Hanson's The Lost Prince, page 404: "Une oeuvre d'imagination, une fable grossièrement tissue, une speculation sur la crédulité publique."

Second: The most natural action for a person whose affiliation has been attacked, whose beliefs as to his paternity and maternity have been rudely jostled, would be to consult forthwith the individuals whom before this he had supposed to be his parents. Did Williams inquire of two dusky denizens of Caughnawaga, near Montreal, whom for more than half a century he had called his father and mother? Far from it. His father died, seven years later, ignorant that his son had denied his fatherhood; while it was not until 1851, ten years after the Lake Michigan trip, that his mother first heard, and from alien tongues, that her son had adopted a royal ancestry.*

Third: A very natural action for a husband, who has learned that he is a king, instead of a half-breed Indian, would be to disclose his royalty to his wife who is thus a queen and to his son, who is thus his blood-heir to the crown. Not so did Williams. Twelve years after the prince's visit to Green Bay, some friends of Williams' wife, who had read the story in Putnam's Monthly, gave to her her first knowledge that her husband was the blood-successor of sixty-six French kings.† Strange and inexplicable mystery of reticence! A person is announced to be Louis XVII, the uncrowned legitimate king of France and Navarre, and that person's wife, and his son, and that aged woman, whom all men believe to be his mother, first learn of this announcement, a decade later, from the lips of strangers!

Fourth: The whole story of the young dauphin's removal to Canada, and of the prince's request for his abdication is inherently improbable. Even admitting his evasion from the Temple, it is improbable that his saviors would have ignored safe, healthy, and

* Letter dated May 11, 1896, to the author by Edward H. Williams, jr., of Bethlehem, Pa., whose father, still living in Philadelphia, was present at Caughnawaga, in 1851, when Eleazer Williams' denial of his mother was first revealed to her.

† Draper's Additional Notes.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 367. Notwithstanding this ignorance by his family until 1853, Williams said in 1851: "I am convinced of my royal descent; so are my family. The idea of royalty is in our minds and we will never relinquish it."—Hanson's The Lost Prince, 346.

convenient refuges in Europe, and have subjected this child of nine years, naturally frail, rendered far more delicate by the rigors of confinement and the torments of his bloodless jailer Simon, to the exposures of a Canadian climate, to the rough experiences of an isolated Indian life; it is improbable that Louis Philippe would have entrusted to his son of but twenty-three years of age, a mission so delicate as an abdication; it is improbable that if Eleazer was the dauphin and was buried from all the world in the Wisconsin woods, was ignorant of his magnificent ancestry and morally certain never to learn it, it is improbable, we say, that even the impolitic Orleans princes would deliberately seek him out and reveal to him that very secret which would make their thrones unstable, their crowned heads uneasy. Were there not enough dauphin pretenders sprinkled about Europe to be thorns in Louis Philippe's side that he should deliberately go about to discover the real heir in America, to be a still deeper sting?

Fifth: The attitude toward each other of both the prince and Williams, subsequent to October, 1841, indicates that no momentous subject had been discussed then and that no Bourbonic wrath had been aroused. Soon after the prince's departure, Williams sent him a paper relating to Charlevoix and LaSalle. The prince's courteous acknowledgement shows no evidence of any secret matter or open resentment. Two years later, in the name of his Indian brethren, Eleazer sent through the prince to Louis Philippe for some books. The books, together with some portraits painted on canvas, were sent with a letter from the prince's secretary announcing the king's compliance. A delay in transit brought from the French consul in New York, a note of regret accompanying the box of books and pictures and the secretary's letter. This is the probable foundation for Williams' boast that he had received an autograph letter from Louis Philippe. When asked to exhibit the autograph, it was lost. The acknowledgement for the books, which Williams wrote to Joinville, is certainly not penned by one who considered himself placed, by disclosures made at Green Bay, "in the position of a superior" to the prince, as this extract will show:

"So well pleased am I with the books and so high an opinion do I entertain of your Royal Highness' benevolence and friendship, as to embolden me to appear before him as a suppliant for a similar favor. For years, I have been desirous to acquaint myself with the writings of the French, either in civil or ecclesiastical histories, as well as in theology. If it is not asking and intruding too much upon your Royal Highness' goodness, may I hope that he will give a favorable hearing to my humble request."*

It should be stated, parenthetically, that whenever Williams was called upon to produce original documents—letters, medals, or what not—these were always missing, burned, stolen, mislaid, among his papers at some other place. He boasted, for example, of several missives from French bishops and cardinals, and one from the secretary of Napoleon III, all inquiring about his history. Like the autograph letter from Louis Philippe, they had all disappeared.†

Sixth: There is a noteworthy slip of detail concerning the prince's visit in Green Bay on that October day, 1841. Williams informs us that after talking far into the night with the prince, during which he himself meditated four or five hours over the parchment, they separated to meet the next day. The prince, twelve years later, informs us that he remained in Green Bay but half a day.‡ Dr. James D. Butler, of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, prints, in the *Nation*, New York, that Joinville did not pass the night in Green Bay.§ To the same effect, is the testimony of Mrs. Elizabeth S. Martin of Green Bay, who met the prince there upon this occasion and who, in a hearty, genial, and unimpaired old age, still survives. She has recorded that the prince did not remain in all over six hours in Green Bay and that the major portion of this time was occupied in preparation for, and in attendance upon, a reception and dinner to which Mrs. Martin, the prince, and Williams, among others, were invited. Immediately after these festivities, the prince started on his pro-

* Robertson's The Last of the Bourbon Story.—Putnam's Magazine, new series, July, 1868, vol. ii, p. 96. † Ibid vol. ii, p. 96.

‡ Hanson's The Lost Prince, page 403: "Pendant une demi journée."

§ Butler's The Story of Louis XVII.—*Nation*, N. Y., May 31, 1894, 417.

jected equestrian tour, westward, tarrying for the night at the house of John McCarty, four or five miles beyond De Pere*—instead of passing those nocturnal hours at the Astor House, in Green Bay, begging Eleazer Williams to resign the kingdom of France!

Holding still in abeyance the issue of veracity, as between the prince and Williams, it should not be overlooked that the latter has been introduced, in this paper, in the maturity of his life, with no account of his origin, his nativity, his youth, the manner of his living, and how his abiding place in Wisconsin came to be. Along this pathway let us now tread awhile, making such excursions from time to time as circumstances demand.

The raid made on leap-year day, 1704, by the French and Indians, under Captain Hertel de Rouville, on the outlying village of Deerfield in northwestern Massachusetts, is still the most thrilling story of savage cruelty.† Deerfield's minister, Rev. John Williams, a stern Puritan of stainless character, his wife and five of their children were taken captives, and were started on a bitter journey toward Montreal. The wife soon fell by the way and was massacred to avoid the burden of carrying her. The remainder reached their northern destination. Eventually all, save one, a daughter of seven years, found their way back to the colony. This daughter, Eunice, was, as time passed, married to an Indian chieftain at Caughnawaga, on the St. Lawrence river. Her susceptible nature yielded to her environment; she abandoned the religion of her fathers for the Catholicism of her captors and became in every complexion, except that of her skin, an Indian.‡ The meager details preserved of her forest life are pathetic reading and would fill our pen did our subject permit. Her grandson, the

* Martin's The Uncrowned Hapsburg, 87; and Draper's Note in the copy of that paper in the library of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

† Read Penhallow's Indian Wars, 24; Hoyt's Antiquarian Researches, 186; Dwight's Travels in New England and New York, vol. ii, 67; Parkman's Half-Century of Conflict, i, 52; Sheldon's Deerfield, i, 93; New England Historical and Genealogical Register, ix, 161.

‡ Williams' Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion, Northampton, 1853, 36; Greenfield, 1800, 45; Boston, 1774, 20.

child of her daughter Sarah and an Indian husband, was Te-ho-ra-gwa-ne-gen, or in our vernacular, Thomas Williams, a warrior of wide renown during the conflict of the American Revolution, fighting against the struggling colonies. The glimpses we have of him, even as an enemy, are of one upright and merciful, one in whom flowered the gentle influences of his New-England ancestry. Thomas Williams' wife, called in our tongue, Mary Ann Rice, was of mingled Indian and New-England extraction, being descended from a captive, taken during a foray upon Marlboro', Massachusetts, early in the eighteenth century.*

Of Thomas and Mary Ann Williams were many children—apparently not fewer than thirteen. Eleven of these are registered, with the dates of their births, at the mission at Caughnawaga. Two of them, Eleazer and Ignatius, are not so registered.† The non-registration of Eleazer has furnished argument that he was not of the same parentage with the eleven who were registered. The absence of registration is, however, easily explained—he was not born at the registration place, the mission at Caughnawaga. Eleazer was born, so his mother has testified, on the shores of Lake George—a frequent hunting-ground of Thomas Williams and his band after the American Revolution.

How did the mother of Eleazer happen to testify thus? This calls for a brief, mayhap an interesting, digression. In 1851, just when Eleazer's dauphin tale was beginning to circulate, a party of engineers was engaged in constructing a railroad through the Caughnawaga reservation. At their head was Edward H. Williams, M.D. He was a distant relative of Eleazer Williams, and, although of full Anglo-Saxon blood, was an adopted member of the Caughnawagas. He is now, 1902, one of the firm of Baldwin, Williams & Co., of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia. One Sunday, during the fall of 1851, Francis

* Smith's Eleazer Williams.—Wis. Hist. Colls., vi, 309; Letter dated April 6, 1896, from Edward H. Williams, jr., the present genealogist of the Williams family; Ward's Rice Family, 37.

† Hanson's The Lost Prince, 468, 435; Smith's Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, vi, 321.

Parkman,* who was then examining the records of the Catholic parish churches in Canada, visited Caughnawaga for the purpose of investigating Eleazer's story. Making his wishes known to Dr. Williams, the engineer, the latter introduced him to George de Lorimier, the chief of the tribe. The dauphin story was new to the chief and to all the Caughnawagas. Chief de Lorimier, an Indian of much astuteness and capacity, decided upon a careful investigation. He sent at once for Mary Ann Williams, and for two of her aged Indian friends, a man and a woman. All three were kept apart from each other and were ignorant why they were summoned. Mary Ann stated without hesitation or reservation that Eleazer Williams was her child and that he was born on the shores of Lake George when her husband with his band was hunting and fishing there. The aged friends of Mary Ann, questioned separately, confirmed in detail what she had stated, both saying that they were with the band at the time the child was born and the squaw adding that, as midwife, she was present at the birth. This examination having been completed, Eleazer's statement of his royal origin was then translated to the assembled Indians. One and all vehemently denounced the tale as a lie, while the little old mother, bursting into tears, exclaimed that she knew Eleazer had been a bad man but she did not know before that he was bad enough to deny his own mother.

Dr. Williams writes: "The mother of Eleazer was very old, possibly one hundred. She was what might be called feeble-minded as old people are, but not in any way lacking in understanding. Her testimony came out in pieces as in the case of old people and from the appearance of the Indians and of herself, during and after the reading of the statement, it was evident that they then heard it for the first time."†

* Dr. Williams has always supposed that this was Francis Parkman, the historian; if so, his opinion of Eleazer Williams in "Half-Century of Conflict" can readily be explained. See vol. i, 88.

† This account of the examination of these aged Indians was dictated by Dr. Williams to his son, Edward H. Williams, jr., of Bethlehem, Pa., by whom it was sent to the writer. Dr. Williams' high character warrants the accuracy of his statement. See *Nation*, New York, June 14, 1894, 446.

A natural inquiry now presents itself, when was Eleazer born? Upon looking to him for information, we find that he has given, at different times, three different dates. In 1824, when applying for membership in the masonic fraternity in Green Bay, he wrote that he was then thirty-two years of age,* that is, born in 1792; by claiming, after 1841, that he was the dauphin of France, he asserted that he was born March 27, 1785;† in a book,‡ the manuscript of which he prepared about 1852, but which was not published until after his death, he declared§ that in 1812, he was twenty-three or twenty-four years old; that is, born in 1788 or 1789. Manifestly, he could not have been born in all three years! When Thomas Williams, in 1800, took his son Eleazer to Longmeadow, Massachusetts, to be educated, he informed the pastor of the local church that his son was born May, 1788.‖ This date fits cleverly into a gap in the chronological order of the births of Thomas' children as registered at the Caughnawaga mission; it corresponds approximately with the only date of birth which Eleazer himself ever put into print, and the year 1788 is the year that was adopted by the present genealogist of the Williams family as the result of his investigations. Thomas Williams also informed the Longmeadow pastor that Eleazer was baptized in his infancy, and was named for his, Thomas', greatuncle, Rev. Eleazer Williams, first minister of Mansfield, Connecticut, Eleazer¶— a christian name of much solemnity which has degenerated into Lazarre.

Therefore, as Eleazer Williams was the son of Thomas and Mary Ann Williams and was born on the shores of Lake George in May, 1788, and as Louis XVII was the son of Louis XVI, king

* Smith's Eleazer Williams,—Wisconsin Historical Collections, vi, 316.

† The dauphin's birth date is in many books; see among others, Cabanès' Les Morts Mystérieuses de l'Histoire, 416; Prévault's Vie de Louis XVII, 9; Beauchesne's Louis XVI, London, 1853, page 11.

‡ Life of Te-ho-ra-gwa-ne-gen, by Eleazer Williams, with introduction by Franklin B. Hough, Albany, 1859.

§ Life of Te-ho-ra-gwa-ne-gen, page 69.

‖ Proceedings at the Longmeadow Centennial, October 17, 1883, p. 230.

¶ Longmeadow Centennial, 230.

of France and Marie Antoinette, archduchess of Austria, and was born at Versailles, France, in March, 1785, we have here what Mr. Weller might call an "alleybi."

Vivid pictures are preserved of Eleazer's boyhood at Caughnawaga, beginning with his third year. Grand Baptiste, who during much of his manhood, was the pilot of the Lachine rapids of the St. Lawrence, was the companion and playmate of Eleazer from their earliest years. He has told us how Eleazer, clad only in a shirt, barefooted and barelimbed roamed about the Indian hamlet, suffering from exposure to cold and storms, and scarring his legs from rough contact with rocks, briars, and thorns.* These inclemencies, a fall over a precipitous cliff,† the scrofulous tendencies in this branch of the Williams family, and the self-infliction, later in life, by means of lashes and tartar emetic, of blisters suggesting marks of shackles and of blows, go a long way toward explaining the brands and scars upon Eleazer's adult person which he was fond of exhibiting as showing where the jailer Simon had bruised him in the Temple tower.‡

This subject of marks and scars allows another brief digression. While the European false dauphins were prevalent, and were annoying the Duchesse d'Angoulême, sister of Louis XVII, with their demands for recognition, she had declared that she would be able to recognize her genuine brother by the inoculation marks upon his shoulders, that tallied with the like marks upon her own shoulders and were peculiar to the royal children of France.§ Forthwith, the European pretenders, all of them, had upon their shoulders these peculiar inoculation scars. Scars, you know, "are not protected from piracy by any law of copyright."‖ Eleazer Williams showed these same inoculation scars. What would you? You surely would not have our American pretender less carefully equipped and panoplied for his imposition than his European brethren?

* Smith's, Eleazer Williams,—Wis. Historical Collections, vi, 313–315.

† *Nation*, New York, June 14, 1894, page 446.

‡Vinton's Louis XVII and Eleazer Williams—Putnam's Magazine, n.s., Sept., 1868, ii, 340. § Ibid, 339. ‖ London Athenæum, Feb. 3, 1894, 142.

Eleazer's emergence into civilization occurred in this manner: In the winter of 1796–7, his father, who never forgot his New England cousinship, was visiting, in Longmeadow, the family of his distant kin, Nathaniel Ely. He suggested that Thomas send one of his sons to Longmeadow, for education, with the idea of his becoming, eventually, a missionary to the Indians at Caughnawaga. Somewhat later, this proposition took more definite and enlarged form. As a result, on January 23, 1800, Thomas Williams, with his two sons, Eleazer and John, arrived in Longmeadow and the boys began to live with Mr. Ely.*

A few sentences from Colton's Tour of the American Lakes, will photograph these Indian lads as they emerged from uncivilized and sylvan scenes into the routine of a New-England school. Colton, a fellow pupil at Longmeadow school, was an eye-witness of what he has printed: †

"From the wildness of their nature and habits it was necessary for the master to humor their eccentricities until they might gradually accommodate themselves to discipline; and but for the benevolent object in view and the good anticipated, it was no small sacrifice to endure the disorder which their manners at first created. Unused to restraint and amazed at the orderly scene around them, they would suddenly jump and cry *Umph!* or some other characteristic and guttural exclamation, and then perhaps spring across the room and make a true Indian assault upon a child on whom they had fixed their eyes, to his no small affright and consternation; or else dart out of the house and take to their heels in such a direction as their whims might incline them. Confinement they could not endure at first, and so long as they did nothing but create disorder (and that they did very effectually) they were indulged until by degrees they became used to discipline and began to learn. Their first attempts by imitation to enunciate the letters of the Roman alphabet were quite amusing—so difficult was it for them to form their tongues and other organs to the proper shapes. If the children of the school laughed (as there was some apology for doing), these boys would

* Longmeadow Centennial, 230–231; Hanson's The Lost Prince, 194.
† Colton's Tour of the American Lakes, London, 1833, i, 162.

sometimes cast a contemptuous roll of the eye over the little assembly and then leaving an *Umph!* behind them would dart out of the house in resentment."

Think you, either of these youths, prior to entering Longmeadow school, had ever dwelt in the palace at Versailles, and had his infantile intellect enlightened, or his manners moulded, by the best instructors in France?

Aided by earnest teachers and assisted by salutary domestic discipline, the young Indian foresters slowly began to tame. The development of Eleazer's powers and capacities was not slow although he never became a great scholar or even a studious man. He visited about with his New-England relatives; he studied with clerical tutors in preparation for his mission. In 1807, he visited Hanover, New Hampshire, and indeed is said to have been "educated" at Dartmouth College.* While there he wore a tinsel badge or star on his left breast and styled himself Count de Lorraine†—a title discoverable in no book of heraldry.

He visited also in New York where he was brought in close contact with Bishop Hobart of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Besides this, he made at least two trips to Caughnawaga at the instance of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to ascertain the prospect of introducing Protestantism among his people. While on one of these trips, in 1811, the Jesuits approached him with a proposition to accept authority from their bishop as a teacher to his tribe. Although educated by Congregationalists, although attracted toward Episcopalianism, he was not averse to this new offer. Indeed, he is said to have been commissioned by the Jesuits as a teacher and to have received from them a good church library with prayer-books and missals.‡

* Parkman's Half-Century of Conflict, 87. President Tucker of Dartmouth College fails to find Williams' name in catalogue or college records. In U.S. Magazine and Democratic Review, July, 1849, page 13, in History of the Dauphin, it is stated that Eleazer was sent to the academy connected with Dartmouth.

† *Nation*, New York, June 14, 1894, page 446.

‡ Ellis' New York Indians.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, ii, p. 418; Ellis' Recollections.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, vii, 243 note.

Now that Williams' life in New England has ended, by his return to Caughnawaga, the question arises, whence came all this money for the private tutoring of this young student, for this traveling hither and yon about the country? From some mysterious Frenchmen who were supporting this exiled Bourbon, reply those who adhere to Williams' royal claims. Indeed, there appeared in a copy of the Albany *Knickerbocker*, a communication over a ficticious signature, which was the origin of the whisperings about this boasted foreign support. The draft of this communication, with erasures, interlineations, and corrections, all in Williams' handwriting, was found in his trunk after his death. Thus was indicated the employment, in the case of the *Knickerbocker*, of one of Williams' common methods of booming himself —the flamboyant presentation of his history to newspapers over false names.* The assertion of foreign money for his education and support sprang entirely from his own imagination. The contemporaneous records of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the Statutes of the State of Massachusetts prove that that board and that state together with private charity paid for his personal expenses and his tuition during his New England residence. This documentary evidence has substantiation from papers found among Williams' effects after his death. Among these were the original bills for his instruction and other outlays together with the evidence that the American Board had been the almoner for their liquidation.† But the expectations of the American Board which were the inducements for these pay-

* Draper's Additional Notes—Wis. Hist. Coll., viii, p. 360; Robertson's The Last of the Bourbon Story—Putnam's Magazine, n. s., July, 1868, ii, 90, 93, 97. The author of this latter article, Rev. Charles F. Robertson, later Episcopal bishop of Missouri, had charge of Williams' papers after his death. Here is a curious instance of the way Williams operated: There appeared in the U. S. Magazine and Democratic Review for July, 1849, a review of H. B. Ely's History of the Dauphin, Son of Louis XVI of France. This is a "review" of a book that never existed, by an author that never existed; both book and author being conjured out of the brain of Eleazer Williams, as an opportunity to bring himself before the public.

† Robertson's The Last of the Bourbon Story.—Putnam's Magazine, n.s., July, 1868, ii, 93.

ments were frustrated by Williams allying himself with another Christian denomination and by the entrance of Williams upon military service.

In 1808, four years before the second war with Great Britain was actually fanned into flame, President Jefferson had written* to various bands of Indians on the border representing that the impending conflict was no quarrel of theirs and urging them to remain neutral. Moreover, he promised that should the British claim their services and they chose instead to break up their settlements and cross into the United States, he would find them other homes and make them children of the young Republic. When the war actually broke out, the president sent a personal invitation to Thomas Williams, as one of the influential Iroquois chiefs, asking him to repress any belligerent movements which might be contemplated by his or other tribes against the United States and promising him full indemnity against any losses which his loyalty to the Republic might occasion; besides, support for his family and himself during the war. Confiding in these assurances, Thomas Williams with other Caughnawagas removed, in 1813, from Canada into Northern New York†—a short removal in point of distance, a long removal in point of results. With this change of allegiance, Thomas entered the American army, and Eleazer—to the regret of his New-England patrons—followed his example.‡

By invitation, Eleazer joined the troops under General Jacob Brown, in confidential service, collecting, through the Canada Indians, important information of the movements of the British forces, and thereby in several instances rendering very valuable assistance to the American interests.§ For this service, as well as for active military operations, he received, he tells us,‖ the com-

* A copy of this letter is attached to the Report of House Committee on Military Affairs, No. 84, 34th Congress, Third Session, January 16, 1857.

† Williams' Te-ho-ra-gwa-ne-gen, 72, 73.

‡ Colton's Tour of the American Lakes, i, 164.

§ Ellis' New York Indians.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, ii, 418.

‖ Report of the House Committee on Military Affairs, No. 303, Claim of Eleazer Williams, 35th Congress, First Session, April 17, 1858.

mendation of his officers for zeal, bravery, and fidelity. Williams' own accounts of his achievements in the field are preserved in his Journal and in a biography of his father which he prepared*—accounts which are so fulsome and so self-laudatory as to suggest that the authentic history of the war of 1812 is yet to be written. In the biography, the author calls himself "Lieutenant-Colonel Eleazer Williams," "Colonel E. Williams, the Superintendent General"†—titles which his most loyal panegyrists withhold, titles which will be sought in vain in the archives of the War Department, titles which are not accorded him by the representatives of the government in his rejected application for a pension. Doubtless, like the very nebulous appellation of Count de Lorraine, these military honors were self-bestowed.

The application made by Williams, in 1851, for a pension was based upon a wound received at the land-battle of Plattsburg, September 14, 1814. His father's nursing and Indian remedies restored him to health and vigor after some weeks' confinement.‡

Upon the close of the war, Thomas Williams and his soldier-son joined the family at its new home at Saint Regis,§ an Indian village bisected by the present boundary between Canada and New York. It appears, however, that both Thomas and his wife returned to Caughnawaga in the evening of their days to die.‖

But Eleazer was too restless and too ambitious to remain long in this seclusion. Moreover, he was discredited by his tribal companions. Empowered, in 1812, to draw from the State of New York an annuity of $266, due them upon some land transfers, he received the sum regularly every year until 1820; but not one cent ever reached the annuitants.¶ In 1820, by reason of

* His Journal is incorporated in great part in Hanson's The Lost Prince; the biography of his father has been mentioned at page 10.

† Williams' Te-ho-ra-gwa-ne-gen, 66, 78, 81, 88.

‡ Hanson's The Lost Prince, 266, 269.

§ Ellis' New York Indians.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, ii, 418. A description of St. Regis by De Costa is in Galaxy, N. Y., 1870, ix, 124.

‖ Thomas Williams died in his 90th year, Sept. 16, 1848.—N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register, iii, 103; his wife died May 1, 1856.—Report of House Com. on Military Affairs, No. 303, 35th Congress, 1st session, Apr. 17, 1858.

¶ Smith's Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, vi, 332.

representations made by the Canadian government to the State of New York, payment to the unfaithful steward was suspended. Perhaps this incident helps to explain the fact that when, half a century later, Eleazer Williams was wrapt in his shroud, not an Indian brave attended his funeral.*

Wandering southward, Williams in November, 1814, visited Oneida Castle, near Rome, New York, renewing acquaintance he had previously made with some Iroquois of the Oneida tribe.† While there, he decided to undertake evangelistic work under the authority of some church. Proceeding to New York, he was, on May 21, 1815, received into the communion of the Episcopal body by Bishop Hobart‡ and on March 23, 1816, he was again at Oneida Castle as lay-reader and catechist.§

He was well adapted for evangelizing work among the aborigines. He had become sufficiently versed in the Christian system and in theology, and was quite an authority on Indian history and lore. Moreover, he was a natural orator, a graceful and powerful speaker—most invaluable aids to persuasion and success among the Indians.‖ Had he been content, in the humble avocation of a schoolmaster and evangelist, faithfully to pursue in sequestered vales, the noiseless tenor of his way, he would belike have rounded out for himself a useful and an honorable career and would have escaped having the events of his life tortured out of all semblance to reality by the novelist and the playwright.

Some scattering points concerning Williams' five years at Oneida Castle must content us:

First point: His acquaintance with Gen. Albert G. Ellis. In November, 1819, Ellis, then nineteen years of age, and a native of Oneida county, New York, took up his abode at Oneida Castle at the urgent solicitation of Williams.¶ The understanding was that

* Huntoon's Eleazer Williams, in Memorial Biographies.—N. E. Hist. and Gen. Society, iii, 252, 270.

† Hanson's The Lost Prince, 270. ‡ Ibid, 274.

§ Christian Journal and Literary Register, New York, February, 1817; Hanson's The Lost Prince, 276.

‖ Ellis' New York Indians.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, ii, 419.

¶ Draper's Sketch of Gen. Albert G. Ellis,—Wis. Hist. Coll., vii, 207.

Ellis was to instruct the Indian children and to be a companion, secretary and assistant for Williams. Both moved together to Wisconsin. Gen. Ellis lived at Green Bay, Wisconsin, the remainder of his days, dying there, universally respected and honored, December 23, 1885, after a residence of sixty-four years.* Gen. Ellis is a frequent authority concerning Eleazer Williams, as the notes disclose.

Second point: Eleazer Williams, save in Indian affairs, was far from being a learned man. Either his New-England education had been superficial or he had forgotten his acquirements. His English was very poor—cases, moods, tenses, were an unknown land. Greek was an utter stranger to him; with Latin he had a bowing acquaintance; and as to French, he could read narrative and history quite well, but he could not speak a single word respectably. His French-Canadian wife, of whom anon, more than once said to him, "Now, Mr. Williams, I do beg of you, never to try to talk French; you can not speak a single word right." His French pronunciation was such as ignorant Indians on the edge of Canada might acquire, but nothing more and that poorly.† And yet, we are called upon to believe that this Gallic stumbler was reared in the very centre of pure Parisian, that he was the brother of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, that his infant lips had been instructed by Marie Antoinette, and that he had been the pupil of the Duchesse de Polignac and the Abbé d'Avaux! Semi-idiocy for a half-score years could never have reduced the genuine dauphin to such lingual imbecility.

Third point: Williams' reminiscences. When Williams took up his residence at Oneida Castle, he occupied, as his abode, the homestead of the sometime-deceased head-chief of the Oneidas, Skanandoah. To this homestead, Williams built an addition for school purposes and here was young Ellis' dominion. On every Thursday afternoon, however, the Indians who would attend—young men, young women, aged persons—were assembled in this room and treated by Williams to discourses of self-glorification.

* 32d Annual Report, Wisconsin Historical Society, 20.

† Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Hist. Coll., viii, 323, 324, 331, 349.

These talks were devoted almost entirely to himself, to his birth and childhood at Caughnawaga, to his infantile precocity, to his always victorious strifes with his playmates, to his white ancestors of the Williams family, to his nomadic exploits with his father at Lake George, to any marvelous feat of his forest life which would prove to his untutored listeners how mighty a hunter, how great a hero he was.* This man of reminiscences, however, is the same who in 1851, told his promoter, Rev. Mr. Hanson, in order to explain his ignorance of French persons and of localities in and about Paris, "I know nothing about my infancy. Everything that occurred to me is blotted out, entirely erased, irrecoverably gone. My mind is a blank until thirteen or fourteen years of age."†

This little school-room incident has its large significance. If it be true as Williams' adherents gravely inform us,‡ that Eleazer the disguised dauphin, between the period of his adoption by Thomas Williams at ten years of age and his removal to Longmeadow in 1800, had a fall into the limpid flood of Lake George, by which a deep gash was cut in his head, and as a result of which distinct recollection began, after a period of mental imbecility and blankness; how happens it that, in these discourses to the Oneida aborigines, whose brains he was filling with his own magnificent proportions, his memory reverted, not to the gorgeous halls at Versailles, not to the gay avenues of rollicking Paris, not to the long line of his royal sires stretching to Hugh Capet, not to the turbulent excitements of the dawning Revolution, not to the somber seclusion of the dreadful Temple, but to the childish freaks of his Indian infancy, to the leafy retreats of Caughnawaga, to his Indian playmates in these woody shades, to hunting and trapping and fishing at Lake George, to his austere strain of pale-faced ancestors in Deerfield and Roxbury?

Fourth point: Williams' personal appearance. While he was thus exalting his ancestors, one of them paid him a visit. Twice

* Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 329.

† Hanson's The Lost Prince, 339.

‡ Hanson's The Lost Prince, 183; Mrs. Evans' Story of Louis XVII, 16.

Thomas Williams traveled to Oneida Castle to visit his son. Young Ellis noticed, as others noticed, how much the son favored his father. If the son was Bourbonic—and no one denies that his appearance, especially in youth, strongly suggested the French*—then was his father Bourbonic also, for the latter had the peculiar cast of countenance stronger than the son.† Lorimier, the head chief of the Caughnawagas in 1851, had the same features in a high degree; so also had Grand Baptiste, the Lachine pilot; so also had another half-breed, Francis Mount, a Rice relative of Eleazer. Indeed these "Bourbon" facial characteristics were common to all the Caughnawaga descendants from white ancestors. Lorimier exhibited to Dr. Williams, at the investigation, several members of the tribe who had the peculiar or "Bourbon" features.‡ The infantile resemblance, real or fancied, to Louis XVII, to which the attention of his mother and himself was called in his childhood by passing soldiers,§ doubtless started the busy and wily mind of the adult Eleazer upon the scheme of personation and deception which a half-century of explanation has not, it appears, completely exposed. ||

Yet Eleazer did not lack traces of his swarthy birth. His skin was dark and of peculiar Indian texture. The pension surgeon, who examined the wound received by Williams at Plattsburg, informs us that his unexposed skin was more the color of an Indian than a white man.¶ When the body of Willams was laid out for burial, in 1858, his skin had turned to a dark red, surely betokening, the authorities state, his Indian origin.**

His hair, eyebrows and eyelashes were of the most inky raven

* Robertson's The Last of the Bourbon Story.—Putnam's Magazine, n. s., ii, 92; Vinton's Louis XVI and Eleazer Williams.—Putnam's Magazine, n. ., ii, 333; Francis' Old New York, 165n.; Harpers' Magazine, June, 1882, 148.

† Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 348.

‡ Letters from Edward H. Williams, jr., April 6, 15, 1896.

§ Neville's Historic Green Bay, 223; Huntoon's Eleazer Williams, 255.

|| Parkman's Half-Century of Conflict, i, 88.

¶ Williams' Redeemed Captive, Northampton, 1853, page 173.

** Letter from Edward H. Williams, jr., May 2, 1896; Butler's The Story of Louis XVII.—*Nation*, New York, May 31, 1894, page 417.

blackness.* His complexion and hair stamped him as of mixed savage and civilized blood; indeed, one connoisseur writes that Eleazer had that peculiar tint which distinguished half-breeds among the Six Nations from half-breeds of the west.† His dark complexion, so opposite from the blond features of Louis XVII‡ was noticed by Mrs. Kinzie in 1830, who had she not heard his Connecticut relatives so often call him their Indian cousin might have thought him a Mexican or a Spaniard.§ Williams' ears also betrayed him,‖ while his Indian habit of "toeing in" could never be overcome even after he became "King of France."¶

Fifth point: Williams as an authority on Indian affairs. Allusion has already been made to his familiarity with aboriginal lore and to the reputation he had acquired thereby. While he was at Oneida Castle, letters reached him from New York, Philadelphia, Hartford, Boston, inquiring about labors of missionaries among the Indians; the travels and discoveries of LaSalle, Hennepin, Marquette; early forays of the red men upon New-England settlements, and topics of kindred nature. The Rev. Samuel F. Jarvis, D.D., Colonel Elihu Hoyt, Franklin B. Hough, and Mrs. Lydia Huntley Sigourney, among others, sought his experience, knowledge, and study concerning Indian history, manners, and traditions.** Yet, there is grave reason to fear, in the cases of two, at least, of these inquirers that Williams deliberately deceived them concerning the massacre at Deerfield. While Epephras and Elihu Hoyt were preparing their "Antiquarian Researches," they conferred with Williams and received some quite new matter concerning the massacre at Deerfield in 1704. For instance, Williams told them that on a recent visit to Canada he had found a silk overdress which his ancestress, Mrs. Eunice Williams, wore that fateful morning when the Indians hurried her off directly

* Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 348.

† Trowbridge's Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Coll., vii, 414.

‡ Beauchesne's Louis XVII, London, 1853, i, 20.

§ Mrs. Kinzie's Wau-Bun, New York, 1856, page 52.

‖ Shea on Eleazer Williams.—Am. Hist. Record, July, 1872, page 300.

¶ Letter from Edward H. Williams, jr., May 2, 1896.

**Robertson's The Last of the Bourbon Story.—Putnam's Mag., n. s. ii, 94.

after the sacking of the village. But it is exceedingly improbable that Mrs. Williams stopped to don her party gown on that massacre morning, while it is a fact that she was tomahawked one day's march out of Deerfield and her body left, unplundered, as it fell, by retreating savages. Likewise, Williams told the Hoyts that returning commanders of expeditions were required to deposit in one of the principal convents in Canada copies of the journals of their expeditions, and that he, Eleazer, had found in a convent in Canada a copy of Rouville's journal of his raid upon Deerfield. But, no such deposit of these documents in convents was ever required, no such documents were ever so deposited and no eye, save Eleazer's, seems to have seen Rouville's journal. It may also be doubted whether Eleazer Williams, being an individual of the male sex, had ever been allowed to investigate convents! Still again, Eleazer related to the Hoyts, and to others, that when Deerfield was destroyed the Indians removed the church-bell, conveyed it as far as Lake Champlain and buried it there; that, later, it was dug up, conveyed to Canada and hung in the Indian church at St. Regis. But apart from the circumstance that St. Regis was not established until half a century after Deerfield was raided, the Deerfield church had no bell.* The practising of this imposition upon Mrs. Sigourney has given us her dainty poetic gem, *The Bell of St. Regis.*† Somewhat later, about 1850, Williams attempted a fraud upon the State of New York.‡ He offered to sell to the secretary of state Marquette's Journal and his original map which Williams claimed to have found in the ruins of the Caughnawaga church. But the Caughnawaga church was not in ruins and the original Marquette Journal and map were, at the time Eleazer offered to sell them and still are, one of the chief jewels of St. Mary's College, Montreal, and beyond purchase.§

* Hoyt's Antiquarian Researches, 193; New England Historical and Genealogical Register, xxviii, 287; Proceedings of Mass. Hist. Soc., 1869-70, 311.

† In Longfellow's Poems of Places.—America, 98. Read Hough's St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, 115; De Costa's Story of the Bell.—Galaxy, N.Y., January, 1870, page 124; Hosmer's How Thankful was Bewitched.

‡ Shea on Eleazer Williams.—American Hist. Record, July, 1872, 309.

§ Winsor's Cartier to Frontenac, 247; Winsor's Narrative and Critical History, iv, 217.

These o'er-true tales are profitless narratives, save as they teach that he who would deliberately, even though mischievously, deceive men and women and a sovereign state, would fabricate a parchment into the hands of the Prince de Joinville and manufacture a proposal of abdication for his lips.

Sixth point: Williams' plan of western empire. This large subject must be greatly condensed. With whom the idea originated of peopling these occident shores with orient aborigines—whether with the Rev. Jedediah Morse, D. D., or with Williams, or with some members of the tribes themselves, is immaterial here.* There were three motives, operating from three different directions, in favor of removing the New York Indians: The motive of Dr. Morse and the Stockbridges, that the latter and their companions might have Christian homes, free from Caucasian contamination; the motive of Williams, that he might lead the Mohawks and their allies to vast areas for a grand imperial confederacy; the motive of the New-York Land Company, that its already acquired preëmption right might attach to the fertile lands of the New-York Indians, which would happen as soon as these should quit the state.†

Williams, however, was never able to enlist the Iroquois in general, or the Oneidas in particular, in his plan for empire. Very few wished to move; still fewer wished to move under the leadership of one whose influence for good had waned steadily, month by month, of his five years' residence among them. Broken faith, unpaid debts, withheld trust-money, were all stored up against him. When, therefore, in the Spring of 1821, for the purpose of treating with the Winnebagoes and Menominees at Green Bay, a party of Indians left Oneida Castle for Buffalo and the Lakes, Williams was of the company to be sure, but not as the representative of the Indians with whom he had lived for the last five years, but as the self-constituted representative of the St. Regis

* Ellis' New York Indians.—Wis. Hist. Coll., ii, 416, 420, 421; Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Hist. Coll., viii, 331; Marsh's Stockbridges.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, iv, 300.

† Davidson's In Unnamed Wisconsin, 55; Sutherland's Early Wisconsin Exploration and Settlement.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, x, 278.

Indians of northern New York, who, more than five years before, had repudiated him.*

His first view of his future home was in August, 1821.† After much difficulty, his party succeeded in negotiating a treaty with the Wisconsin Indians, but it called for so meagre a strip of territory and for so exorbitant a compensation that the report of it at Oneida Castle drew out all the pent up indignation of the Oneidas. They forwarded to Bishop Hobart a document dated November 21, 1821, remonstrating against the scheme to rob them of their homes and make them fugitives and vagabonds, cautioning him against recognizing Williams as having any authority to represent them either civilly or religiously, and requesting that he be withdrawn.‡

No attention seems to have been paid to this document and no further action was attempted by the Oneidas, as Williams' next visit to Wisconsin, in 1822, closed his residence in New York and opened a new chapter in his career.

The second party for Green Bay contained few if any Iroquois but many Brothertowns, Stockbridges, and Munsees. After much parleying, in which Williams urged many plausible arguments and made many fulsome promises, the Wisconsin Indians finally entered into a treaty with their visitors, admitting the New-York Indians to an occupancy in common with them of all their country without reserve—a treaty which related to nearly one-half of the present State of Wisconsin and became the source of endless trouble.§ The next season about one hundred and fifty Oneidas and as many Stockbridges removed to the new possessions. But the implacable hostility of the Six Nations, as a whole, continued and although Oneidas and Stockbridges dribbled year after year into the new territory, the fewness of the numbers was a bitter

* Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 334; Whittlesey's Recollections.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, i, 168 note.

† Durrie's Green Bay, 8.

‡ Davidson's In Unnamed Wisconsin, 64; Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 336.

§ Ellis' Recollections.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, vii, 225; Ellis' New York Indians.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, ii, 428.

disappointment to Williams and a menace to his imperial ambitions.*

On March 3, 1823, Eleazer Williams married Mary Jourdain of Green Bay.† She was the daughter of Joseph Jourdain, the blacksmith of the Indian department at the Bay. Her mother was the daughter of Michael Gravel, and the granddaughter of a Menominee chief.‡ She was a pretty girl and the owner of a large acreage.§ At her marriage, she was fourteen years of age and her husband thirty-five. She was at the time betrothed to a worthy young trader and was not consulted as to her willingness to marry "priest Williams," nor was she even allowed a woman's privilege of a courtship, but was notified on that March morning that she need not go to school that day as she was to be married that evening to "priest Williams."‖ In the fall of 1825, Williams took his young wife to New York where Bishop Hobart baptised and confirmed her and gave her his surname. This ceremony excited almost as vivid a sensation in the fashionable world as had the christianization of Pocahontas in London, two centuries before.¶ In 1846, Williams informed the then genealogist of the Williams family that his wife, Mary Hobart Williams, was a distant relative of the king of France from whom he had been honored with several splendid gifts and honors, and among the rest, a golden star.** Williams also stated that the Prince de Joinville was a relative of his wife and that this relationship caused the visit which that prince made to him in 1841; and the gifts that followed the visit††—meaning the interview, with the account of which this paper opened.

No comment is offered upon this story except to urge that if the prince *was* a relative of Mrs. Williams, he was a very ungallant

* Ellis' New York Indians.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, ii, 430.

† Hanson's The Lost Prince, 300.

‡ Grignon's Recollections.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, vii, 253.

§ Trowbridge's Eleazer Williams.—Wis. Hist. Coll., vii, 414; McCall's Journal.—Wis. Hist. Coll., xii, 185; Hanson's The Lost Prince, 300.

‖ Draper's Additional Notes.—Wis. Hist. Coll., viii, 367 note.

¶ Martin's Uncrowned Hapsburg, 92; Neville's Green Bay, 222.

** Williams' Williams Family, 96.

†† Williams' Redeemed Captive, Northampton, 1853, page 177.

young Frenchman to travel all the distance from Paris to Green Bay and not even tender his respects to his kinswoman.

Mrs. Williams had three children—two of them daughters who died unmarried; her son John, born about 1825, was in 1867, the captain of a steamboat on Lake Winnebago* and died in 1884 from injuries received in an explosion.†

Fragments of the Journal kept by Mrs. Williams belong to the Wisconsin State Historical Society. From perusing these pages, one infers her a woman of limited education, of great vivacity and shrewdness. Its pages are scanned in vain for evidences of affection for her husband, who is always "*Mr.* Williams." Almost the only verbal flower of love that peeps above the surface of this diary-garden is the brief entry, "My very dear grandson, Genie, died in Oshkosh," with the date. Mrs. Williams died upon her farm, on July 21, 1886.‡

During Williams' visit to the East in 1826, he was ordained as a deacon by Bishop Hobart.§ He preached at the post-school in Green Bay after his return, using as the basis of his discourses, sermons of his remote ancestor, Rev. John Williams, which had fallen to his charge.‖

But our Williams was not so occupied with the heavenly kingdom as to forget that grand earthly empire that he would fain establish. And yet, the establishing was very slow. The New York Indians came in but scant numbers; and those already settled, disaffected by his broken promises and his want of earnestness for their spiritual welfare, withdrew their confidence.

In 1827, the Menominees showed their opposition to him by concluding a treaty with the United States in which they ignored almost entirely, any rights formerly given by them to the New York Indians. If ill-faith be imputed to both of these contracting parties, much justification can be alleged. The arrivals of Indians from New York had been so few, and promised in the future to be

* Allibone's Dictionary of Authors, iii, 2738.

† Current issue of *Green Bay Gazette;* same paper, issue of July 22, 1886.

‡ *Green Bay Gazette*, July 22, 1886. § Davidson's Unnamed Wis., 65.

‖ Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 324.

so few, that it was not fair to the rapidly growing West to concede to those few an imperial territory. It was poor policy to yield in perpetuity to a few Oneidas, Stockbridges, Brothertowns, Munsees, a piece of territory equal to about half of the State of Wisconsin.*

The details of much negotiation and of much heart-burning resulting from this treaty are immaterial here. The conclusion was reached in 1838, when, as the consequence of large sales made to the government by the Menominees and Winnebagoes and as the consequence of the inrush of white settlers to purchase these sold lands, the New York Indians were localized in insignificant and meagre sections along Duck Creek, west of the lower Fox River.†

This was the end of the scheme of ambition and temporal sovereignty which for almost a score of years Eleazer Williams had nourished and fostered. The dusky empire had disintegrated, the different bands, discordant and hostile, had been confined in narrow paddocks, the tide of white civilization was rushing in. No longer a public character Eleazer had withdrawn from Green Bay and was residing upon his wife's estate at Little Kaukaulin, there to remain in humble obscurity until a wilder dream of wider empire should arouse his dormant hopes.

What Williams' standing was at Green Bay during his residence there is declared by John Y. Smith, a citizen of long standing, a man of great force of character, thorough probity, and literary culture:‡

"He was a fat, lazy, good-for-nothing Indian; but cunning,§ crafty, fruitful in expedients to raise the wind and unscrupulous about the means of accomplishing it. During the last four or five years of my acquaintance with him, I doubt whether there was a man in Green Bay whose word commanded less confidence than

* Ellis' Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, viii, 341.

† Ibid, 343; Ellis' New York Indians.—Wis. Hist. Coll., ii, 445, 448. Williams' views of the wrong done to the New York Indians are in Colton's Tour of the American Lakes, i, 175.

‡ Smith's Eleazer Williams.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, vi, 332.

§ Cunning is one of the earliest characteristics of the adult Williams which the writer has observed,—August, 1830.—Mc Call's Journal.—Wisconsin Historical Collections, xii, 185.

that of Eleazer Williams. His character for dishonesty, trickery, and falsehood became so notorious and scandalous that respectable Episcopalians preferred charges against him to Bishop Onderdonk. But as Williams was located in the diocese of Wisconsin under Bishop Kemper, the bishop of New York disclaimed jurisdiction in the case; and, as Williams was there under a commission from a society in New York, Bishop Kemper disclaimed jurisdiction of the case, and in consequence of these counter-disclaimers the charges were never investigated."

It is not pleasant to perpetuate these characterizations, to recall these misconducts of one long dead, but the truth of history is involved and the claims of dauphinship for Eleazer Williams depend upon his own personal statements. Candor, therefore, compels us to say—and these pages ill-perform their mission if they fail to show "that an obstinate persisting to act a false part was exactly suitable to his character,"* that he abounded in sly cunning, was prone to tricks, apt to exaggerate, quick to invent, utterly untruthful.

Notwithstanding Williams' permanent residence in Wisconsin, he did not sever his connection with his eastern kin. In 1835, he was in St. Regis securing evidence in order to obtain long-delayed justice from the government of the United States, for his father's services and sacrifices in the war of 1812. Three years later, he was again in New York state and visited in Buffalo, where and when he whispered his dauphinship into the ear of George H. Haskins, the editor of the *Buffalo Express*.† In the fall of 1841, he was again at St. Regis and was visiting there when the newspapers told of the trip which the Prince de Joinville was about to make to the Mississippi by way of the lakes, the Fox and Wisconsin rivers—that trip with a mention of which this paper opened.

After the visit of the prince to Green Bay, in 1841, but little in the life of Williams requires notice for several years. He was almost entirely disassociated from the Indians but was much

* Used in Ram on Facts, N. Y., 1890, 435, referring to Arnold du Tilh.

† Robertson's The Last of the Bourbon Story.—Putnam's Magazine, n.s., ii, 96; Draper's Additional Notes.—Wisconsin Historical Coll., viii, 362.

occupied in pressing against the government claims growing out of their removal to the western country. In 1846, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America, appropriated money for his support as a missionary; but after two years this stipend was withdrawn, the result not justifying its continuance.* In 1850, he went East to proffer his services for the removal of the Seneca Indians from Indian Territory to the upper waters of the Mississippi. His offer was declined. Not returning again to his family, he took up his residence at St. Regis where he commenced a school and where he had some kind of a missionary appointment from the Diocesan Society of New York and from the Boston Unitarian Society.† Upon the recommendation of his neighbors, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel renewed its appropriation, but in 1853, this was again withdrawn owing to his protracted absence from duty.‡

Down to the fall of 1851, Williams had been a *secret* pretender. His first obtrusion of himself as a dauphin had been in private ways, by personal interviews, by anonymous letter, by fictitious signature to suggestions to newspapers, by artful acting when visiting friends. A single illustration of his conduct must suffice for many, *ex uno disce omnes:*

Dr. Vinton writes that in August, 1844, while he and Williams were in the parlor of the residence of Mrs. O. H. Perry at Newport, the writer's attention was attracted by the gesticulations and other antics of Williams who was examining a volume of engravings, the names of which were on the reverse, and accidently came upon a print of Simon, the dauphin's cruel jailer in the Temple. Dr. Vinton says, "I saw Williams sitting upright and stiff in his chair, his eyes fixed and wide open, his hands clenched on the table, his whole frame shaking and trembling as if a paralysis had seized him. . . Pointing to the wood-cut, he said, 'That image has haunted me day and night, as long as I can remember. 'T is the horrid vision of my dreams; what is it? Who is it?'" The leaf was turned and Simon's name was on the

* Huntoon's Eleazer Williams, 259. ‡ Ibid, 260.

† Robertson's The Last of the Bourbon Story.—Putnam's Mag., n.s., ii, 98.

reverse.* From this incident those who did homage to Williams drew sure conclusions; but I have no doubt the scene was a very clever bit of play and if Dr. Vinton is not mistaken in the year, Williams was engaged longer than has been believed in working up his imposture. It should be added that Williams is credited with the same theatrical piece of acting about six years later at the residence of Professor Day of Northampton—there was another picture of Simon, Williams greatly excited. and the ejaculation, "Good God, I know that face, it has haunted me through life."†

Another way in which Williams brought himself into notice by the underground plan is exhibited by the following letter written under a false name to a Mr. Reed of Buffalo in August, 1850:

"It so happened that I was at the Eagle Hotel in Philadelphia when you and Mr. Williams (the dauphin of France,) were there. Curiosity, as well as having taken an interest in the history of the unfortunate Prince, has led me to address you and ask you to have the goodness to inform me if you are in posession of any historical facts in relation to this wonderful man."

In the autumn of 1851, Williams made by chance the acquaintance of the Rev. J. H. Hanson of New York.‡ Hanson had read of the claims of Williams through a cunning letter which had appeared in the *New York Courier and Enquirer*. Through Hanson's energetic espousal, Eleazer was converted from a secret, surreptitious pretender into an open vindicator of his royal position. He became a genuine monarch, issued manifestoes, signed the initials L. C. to his documents, received notes phrased "Your Most Gracious Majesty," and promised his votaries passage to France in a national ship when he should obtain his own.§

It is difficult accurately to characterize Rev. Mr. Hanson as the promoter of Williams and his claims, As the grandnephew

* Vinton's Louis XVII and E. Williams.—Putnam's Magazine, n.s., ii, 331.

† Huntoon's Eleazer Williams, 263; Hanson's The Lost Prince, 354.

‡ Hanson's The Lost Prince, 336.

§ Letter to author from George Sheldon of Deerfield, Mass., Apr. 6, 1896; Draper's Additional Notes on Eleazer Williams.—Wis. Hist. Coll., viii, 369.

of Oliver Goldsmith,* Hanson could well have been credulous and simple-minded. But so much imposition was practised by Williams, so many marvelous tales he related, so many documents he boasted to own yet failed to exhibit, so many discrepancies are palpable in his Journal, so many statements unsubstantiated, that the wonder is the utmost extreme of gullibility did not become suspicious.

Whatever may have been Hanson's motive, he assumed vigorously the promotion of the pretender. His first preserved printed composition in behalf of Williams' dauphin claims was the article "Have We a Bourbon Among Us?" in Putnam's Magazine, February, 1853. That magazine had published its initial number in January, 1853, and, like the scriptural conies, it was a feeble folk. What had manifestly been expected, if not intended, by the publication of Hanson's article was immediately accomplished. Twenty thousand names were added to the subscription list of Putnam's.† In 1854, appeared "The Lost Prince," in which Hanson amplifies and supplements what he, and other Williams worshippers also, had printed in a fugitive manner. For two or three years, the magazine and Williams basked in the sunshine of success. Finally, however, as the speciousness of his claims and the weakness of their supports became fully appreciated, the popularity of Williams and the circulation of the magazine rapidly declined.

He died August 28, 1858, in great poverty, suffering from want of attention and from the necessaries of life. He had dwelt mostly alone in a neat cottage erected by friends subsequent to the publications which excited so general an interest in 1853.

"His household presented an aspect of cheerless desolation without a mitigating ray of comfort or a genial spark of home-light. His neatly finished rooms had neither carpets, curtains, nor furniture, save a scanty supply of broken chairs and invalid tables; boxes filled with books, the gifts of friends, lay stored away in corners; his dining-table, unmoved from week to week and covered

* Putnam's Mag., n.s., July, 1868, ii, 127.

† Huntoon's Eleazer Williams, 252.

with the broken remains of former repasts and his pantry and sleeping-room disordered and filthy, left upon the visitor an oppressive feeling of homeless solitude that it was impossible to efface from the memory."*

The occupant of this ill-kept abode, his family which he had wilfully deserted, a thousand miles away, his hopes and ambitions turned to ashes, crept scant honored into a lonely grave.

Four observations will conclude this writing:

First: Mention has been made of the attempts to secure from the government of the United States indemnity for the losses sustained by Thomas Williams in the war of 1812. Not until the death of Thomas and his widow was the proper reparation made; and in doing this justice, the government has also done justice to the truth of history. On April 17, 1858, the House Committee on Military Affairs reported on a claim which it designated as the claim of "Eleazer Williams, heir of Thomas Williams." This report found as facts Thomas Williams' distinguished and unrecompensed military services and his great pecuniary sacrifices. The report found also his death and the death of his widow and then found that she left "as her sole heir and devisee her son, the Rev. Eleazer Williams, who is likewise the sole surviving son and heir of Thomas Williams." Representative Pendleton of Ohio, an acute and sagacious lawyer, reported these findings and stated that they were "abundantly proven by the evidence."† And so, within five months of his death, Eleazer Williams was "abundantly proven," by evidence preserved in the archives at Washington, the son—not of Louis XVI; the heir—not of France, but the son and heir of the Caughnawaga Indians, Thomas and Mary Ann Williams, whose paternity for twenty years he had disowned but whose heritage he did not hesitate to accept.

Second: It is fair to Williams to remark that however much he might beguile others he did not deceive himself. His private letters written, and his intimate conversations spoken, after the Joinville incident of 1841, disclose this. For an instance: In the

* Williams' Te-ho-ra-gwa-ne-gen, introduction, 13.

† Rep. 303, 35th Cong., 1st Session.